

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

291335Z Dec 04

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 010245

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [KPAL](#) [IZ](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: KING OPTIMISTIC ON WEST BANK, "MORE NERVOUS" ON IRAQ AFTER JANUARY "CROSSROADS"

Classified By: CDA DAVID HALE, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

SUMMARY

11. (C) King Abdullah told Senators Joseph Lieberman and Mark Dayton that the Palestinians need to see quick results after the January 9 election, and that Iraq's political leadership should create an Arab identity for Iraqis to overcome religious schisms and interference by Iran. End summary.

"New Era" on West Bank Needs Housecleaning, Deliverables

12. (C) Senator Joseph Lieberman and Senator Mark Dayton met King Abdullah in Amman on December 28 to discuss the West Bank, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Foreign Minister Hani Al-Mulki, Royal Court Minister Samir Al-Rifai and Media Advisor Seema Bahous also attended the meeting. Senator Lieberman, just off the plane from Tel Aviv, opened the meeting by saying he sees a "new era" coming on Israeli-Palestinian relations, that the Palestinian Authority needs to clean house and establish security, and that Israel is prepared to be "generous" if the situation develops well. The King noted Palestinian Authority front-runner Abu Mazen's long-standing opposition to the intifada and said that Abu Mazen would work to resolve the security situation after his election. He said that a brigade of 1,500 of the 2,000 security officers trained by Jordan in the 1990s could be put on the ground in a matter of weeks to help establish security.

13. (C) Foreign Minister Al-Mulki promoted bringing forward the London conference to a January date in order to show international support for the Palestinians as soon as possible. Senator Lieberman said there were a lot of hopes and expectations about the post-January 9 period; he appreciated that Jordan and others could play a role in providing deliverables. The King called attention to the need for financial support for the Palestinian Authority, which may not be able to meet payroll after January 2005.

14. (C) The King said Abu Mazen needs to win the election and then win "the street" by providing tangible results for Palestinians. If the people have hope, they will stop the bombers, the King said. Does Abu Mazen have the confidence of the people, Senator Lieberman asked? The Jordanians reflected some doubt on that score, and emphasized that Abu Mazen needed to show some concrete results before his authority would be consolidated.

Iran Seeking An Iraq "Beholden" to Tehran

15. (C) On Iraq, the King returned to his preoccupation with Iranian meddling. Iran, he said, wants the new Iraqi government to be "beholden to Tehran." He had "no idea" what 2005 would bring, especially if the elections do not go well. He called for speeding up reconstruction of the Iraqi army and the reversing of the negative consequences of "de-Baathification." The King said that the way to "go after" Iran is through a stable Iraq; conversely, that the way for Iran to "go after" the United States is through an unstable Iraq. Mulki said that the only way to have a strong Iraq is to have an Arabic Iraq, not an Islamic Iraq. Senator Lieberman noted the long history of tension between Iran and Iraq, which the King recast as "centuries" of Persian-Arab tension, which in this situation could be a useful tool for creating Arab solidarity in and around Iraq, and a united front against Iranian meddling.

Syrian "Old Guard" Blocking Change

16. (C) On Syria, the King said that Syria has made "every conceivable mistake" since 2000. President Bush had asked him to convey a message to Bashar al-Asad that could not be more blunt: "get your act together or face the consequences." (The King added that last week's Amman meeting with Asad was postponed until January because of the birth of Bashar's child.) The King was pessimistic of the prospects for change in Damascus, as the Allawi mafia would

lose its grip on money and power, including in Lebanon, if reforms proceeded. Foreign Minister Al-Mulki said the Syrians believe Iraq's instability insulated them from pressure; when Iraq stabilized, the international community could "talk sense" to Syria. Al-Mulki closed by saying the United States and Jordan need to concentrate on "disentangling" Syria and Iran from Iraq.

What Does Jordan Need? Full Stomachs

17. (C) When asked about Jordan's needs, the King spoke in now-familiar terms of his strategic relationship with the U.S. and his intention to continue to take risks in the pursuit of our common policies in the region, in stabilizing Iraq, assisting in the peace process, and fighting terrorism. However, the region would be in turmoil for some time, and he needed the political insulation that came with additional assistance. Unpopular policies are more palatable to the people on a "full stomach." He reviewed specifically Jordan's needs for enhanced border security measures, some of which were costly.
HALE